

GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM

Radio Address – Agriculture and Michigan's economy

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Hello, this is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

One of the best family outings in Michigan during the late summer or fall is at one of our great Michigan fairs, such as the Peach Festival in Romeo or the Posen Potato Festival.

I had the privilege of traveling to the UP State Fair this past week in Escanaba – and I was also at the State Fair in the Lower Peninsula to celebrate a Michigan milestone: the 100th anniversary of the fair's location in the city of Detroit.

This is a great source of pride for Michigan, because we are the only state in the nation to hold a statewide fair in a major urban center.

The tradition goes back a century, but what hasn't changed in all that time is how vital agriculture is to our economy and to our everyday lives, no matter which peninsula or which corner of Michigan you call home.

We are a state of high-tech auto manufacturers, but we're also a state of high-tech farms. We have towering cityscapes and breathtaking landscapes. We're a state of vineyards and stockyards, of combines and canneries and carburetors.

Agriculture is Michigan's second largest industry, valued at \$37 billion a year and employing half a million Michigan citizens.

We are proud to be the second most diverse state in the nation in agricultural commodities, from our wide variety of field crops to specialty crops like cherries and blueberries and asparagus.

And we are working to make sure that farmers continue to thrive in Michigan.

Since 2003, we've opened eight new Agricultural Processing Renaissance Zones in areas like Calhoun County, Ottawa County and Ontonagon County, all of which help the agriculture industry create jobs and increase investment by establishing tax free areas.

And, for example, thanks to a new Community Development Block Grant we announced just this year, Boar's Head Provisions in Holland Charter Township is expanding its food production facilities where they'll create 115 new jobs as a result.

These steps and so many others are good for business. But they also protect our valuable farmland.

This is so important for Michigan, and it's why my Administration has acted to make sure that over 4,000 acres of prime apple and peach farmland will be protected for generations.

We are blessed in Michigan with abundant natural resources, with a great agricultural heritage, and with hard working people who sustain this critical industry. And this week was a great reminder that we have to continue our work to support them and to help our farmers and agricultural processors succeed in the 21st century.

Thank you for listening.